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Ronald Shiffler

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The value of hiring information technology interns

If you own or work in a business that depends on computers, a network or



Ronald Shiffler

a website to function effectively, please answer the following simple questions:

- Do you have someone on staff who can quickly provide support (that means “fix the @#\$% thing”) when something goes wrong with one of your computers?

- Are you absolutely, positively, no-doubt-about-it certain that your network is secure from hacking, breaches, viruses, worms and other unpleasanties?

- Does your website load quickly, contain no “old” information and make you proud?

If you answered “no” to even one of those questions (yet alone all three!), then you need to consider hiring a student intern.

What’s in it for you? That’s pretty easy. You will be able to say “yes” to all three questions in short order. Wouldn’t you like to have peace of mind knowing you had someone in the store or office to correct a problem with your information technology (IT)?

Do you realize that just 55 miles west of Savannah there is a magnificent College of Information Technology sitting smack dab in the middle of the Georgia Southern University campus where all these skills (and more) are being taught to the next generation of IT professionals?

But wait. There’s more. In the bachelor of science degree program in information technology, students are required to complete an internship before graduating.

Let’s connect the dots. We are teaching these IT students how to provide desktop support, how

to design, build and maintain websites, how to install a network, how to troubleshoot the security of a network and how to update and use popular software applications, in addition to more advanced support such as virtualization, disaster recovery, storage technologies and data mining.

Back to the dots. Your company needs many of those skills. Conclusion: We have what you need.

This is the proverbial “win-win” situation. You help our students complete a degree requirement, you provide them with some work experience and you help them clarify what area(s) of IT they really like.

In return, our IT students help you run your business more efficiently, provide you with in-house IT expertise and may just become your next permanent hire. Many companies who hire our interns do so as a screening process for full employment.

Interns are not costly. We require students to log a minimum of 280 hours in an internship lasting one semester. At \$10 per hour (or more if you can afford it), you are investing less than \$3,000 for roughly 20 hours of work per week for three months.

Many interns remain with their employer until they graduate.

We place a lot of our students in internships in Atlanta, South Carolina and Florida. But, we don’t seem to do much business with businesses in Savannah.

Here is your opportunity. Simply call Dr. Art Gowan, chair of the IT department, at 912-478-7679 or email him at artgowan@georgiasouthern.edu.

Ronald E. Shiffler is the dean of the College of Business Administration at Georgia Southern University. He can be reached at shiffler@georgiasouthern.edu.

Join the chamber to market your business to 11 million visitors a year

How can you get your business listed for free and reach 11 million people a year? By joining the



Bill Hubbard

Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce and being part of a 2,000-plus company networking circle.

Right now is the perfect time to join, especially if your business falls within the following categories: Accommodations, attractions, entertainment, retail and shopping, tours, nightlife, restaurants and transportation.

As a hospitality partner, you will be listed for free in the 2012 Savannah Official Visitor Guide.

The Visitor Guide will be distributed to our 11 visitor centers throughout the state of Georgia, as well as our four local visitor centers. Visitor Guides are dispersed at the meetings and conventions that come to our area, as well as to reunion groups,

tour groups and more.

An electronic version of this guide is also included on VisitSavannah.com, which receives 8.3-plus million page views annually.

The guide is in the final production stages, and you don’t want to miss this once-a-year opportunity to reach the 11 million tourists and potential visitors to your business who visit our beautiful area each year.

Despite a challenging economy, Savannah’s tourism industry has maintained consecutive growth in recent years. Last year, direct spending by visitors had an impact of more than \$1.7 billion and tourism indirectly employs more than 20,000 people.

Don’t wait. The final deadline to be included in the 2012 Official Visitor Guide is Wednesday, Aug. 31.

In addition to your inclusion in the 2012 Official Visitor Guide, your Chamber membership will also gain you the following benefits:

- Online listings on SavannahChamber.com

and VisitSavannah.com.

- Networking opportunities.
- Business seminars.
- Marketing and advertising opportunities.
- Insurance discounts.
- Member-to-member discounts.
- Referrals.
- Brochure racks/display cases.
- Advocacy, involvement and education.
- Representation in governmental affairs.

The benefits you receive from your membership with the Savannah Chamber and Visit Savannah will allow you the opportunity to gain exposure in the local community, provide protection from larger governmental issues such as increases in governmental regulation and costs, connect you with members of the hospitality industry and much more.

Currently, the Savannah Chamber has more than 2,000 diverse member businesses, large and small, which employ more than 77,000 people in the Savannah area.

Together, we work to enhance the economic climate of the Savannah area for business growth and quality of life through excellence in programming, services and marketing.

We hope you will join us in accomplishing our goals as a community and allow us the opportunity to serve you in the near future.

For more information on joining the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce and on being listed in the 2012 Official Visitor’s Guide, contact the chamber’s Member Services Department at 912-644-6434.

Remember, the deadline for inclusion in the Visitors Guide is Wednesday, Aug. 31, and you don’t want to miss this opportunity to grow your business and network in the Savannah community. Join and be listed today.

Bill Hubbard is the president and CEO of the Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce. He can be contacted at 912-644-6421 or bhubbard@savannahchamber.com.

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